

MANAGEMENT SITUATION ANALYSIS

FOR THE

SNAKE RIVER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
PINEDALE FIELD OFFICE
PINEDALE, WYOMING**

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

BLM	U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CVM	contingent valuation model
DEQ	State of Wyoming, Department of Environmental Quality
EIS	environmental impact statement
E.O.	executive order
EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
FWS	U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service
NPS	U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service
ORV	off-road vehicle
PLO	public land order
RMP	resource management plan
R&PP	Recreation and Public Purposes Lease
TCP	traditional cultural properties
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USFS	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service
VRM	visual resource management
WGFD	State of Wyoming, Game and Fish Department

PLANNING CRITERIA AND PLANNING ISSUES

PLANNING CRITERIA

Guidelines have been developed to assist in preparing the Snake River Resource Management Plan Environmental Impact Statement (Snake River RMP EIS). These guidelines, or planning criteria, serve to identify the scope and parameters of the RMP EIS for the interdisciplinary planning team, the BLM managers, and the public; and insure that planning is focused on planning issues.

Planning criteria are based on standards prescribed by laws and regulations; guidance provided by the BLM Wyoming State Director; analysis of information pertinent to the planning area; and the results of consultation and coordination with the public and governmental agencies.

The planning criteria focus on the preparation of alternatives, the analysis of their effects, and the selection of a preferred alternative.

Criteria for Developing Alternatives

The following will be considered in one or more of the alternatives.

- Management of significant cultural, historic, and scenic resources.
- The protection and enhancement of riparian areas.
- The protection and enhancement of natural resources and ecological processes.

- The protection of habitat for threatened, endangered, proposed, and candidate species and other important plants and animals.
- Identification of lands suitable for sand and gravel mining, motorized vehicle use, rights-of-way construction, and other activities that may result in surface disturbance.
- Identification of lands where rights-of-way construction and other surface-disturbing activities would be avoided.
- Livestock grazing practices that are compatible with other resource management objectives.
- Opportunities for enhancing recreation.
- Opportunities for adjusting landownership to meet goals for resource management and public access.
- Opportunities for maintaining open space.

Criteria for Analyzing Environmental Consequences

The following potential environmental consequences will be addressed.

- The effects of opening or closing public lands to development.
- Effects of surface-disturbing activities on air quality, scenery, cultural resources, recreational opportunities, vegetation, watershed, and wildlife.

- Effects of recreational activity on cultural resources, recreational experiences, vegetation, watershed, and wildlife.
- Effects of landownership adjustments on recreational opportunities and open space.
- Economic impacts of land use restrictions.

Criteria for Selecting the Preferred Alternative

The following considerations will guide selection of the preferred alternative.

- The level of land use restrictions needed to protect resources and keep lands and resources available for public use.
- The potential for the occurrence of mineral resources such as sand, gravel, oil and gas, and gold.
- Consistency with the land use plans, programs, and policies of other federal agencies, state and local governments, and Native American tribes.
- The potential eligibility of public lands along the Snake and Gros Ventre rivers and their tributaries to be included within the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

PLANNING ISSUES

The process for developing an RMP EIS begins with identifying the issues (40 CFR 1501.7; 43 CFR 1610.4-1).

Issues express concerns, conflicts, and problems with the existing management of public lands. Frequently, issues are based on how land uses affect resources. Some issues are concerned with how land uses can affect other land uses, or how the protection of resources affect land uses.

The following preliminary planning issues have been identified.

Issue 1: Cooperative Management

Public lands administered by the BLM along the Snake River are interspersed with private and state lands and bounded upstream and downstream by lands administered by the NPS and USFS. Some of the private and state lands are affected by recreational easements administered by the BLM. The Army Corps of Engineers and Teton County also have jurisdictional responsibilities including cooperative maintenance of levees for flood control. Several organizations are interested in cooperating with private landowners and governmental agencies for maintaining open space and public access. Opportunities for cooperation include coordination by BLM, NPS, and USFS in addressing river floating, consideration of landownership adjustments, and leasing public lands for parks and pathways. Other benefits of cooperation could include sharing scientific information and preparing joint studies and recommendations on matters such as wild and scenic river potential.

Issue 2: Recreational Opportunities

Public lands along the Snake River are used by the residents of Teton and surrounding counties for high quality recreation which is both accessible and affordable. Activities include hiking, horseback riding, cross country skiing, boating, fishing, picnicking, and watching wildlife. Recreational use is growing with the result that some public lands might experience crowding and associated resource problems, such as increases in noxious weeds or a decline in recreational

experiences. Questions to be addressed in the Snake River RMP EIS involve how best to accommodate the demand for recreation on these public lands, while protecting important natural resources and recreational experiences.

Issue 3: Development of Construction Materials

Special attention is needed to address the mining of sand and gravel in the planning area. These materials are needed primarily

to maintain levees along the Snake River for flood control, and for road construction around Jackson Hole. Materials are readily available from public, private, and state lands but are often trucked in from outside the area at high cost to end users.

Questions to be addressed in the Snake River RMP EIS include how much mining of sand and gravel is appropriate on public lands, and what conditions should be applied to protect recreational opportunities, watershed resources, and important wildlife habitat.

DESCRIPTION OF EXISTING MANAGEMENT

INTRODUCTION

This section describes current management practices, based on compliance with federal laws, regulations, and BLM policy, as well as adherence to court decisions granting recreational access and allocating livestock grazing within the Snake River corridor. Generally, mineral development is prohibited, although mining for mineral materials, such as sand and gravel, can be allowed on a case-by-case basis.

Air Quality Management

Management Objectives: Maintain or enhance air quality, protect public health and safety and sensitive resources, and minimize emissions that cause acid rain or degraded visibility.

Management Actions: Authorized actions on public lands avoid violation of Wyoming and national air quality standards. This is accomplished through the coordination of activities with the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Monitoring for acid rain and its impacts on the Class I airshed of the Bridger Wilderness is conducted in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service, DEQ, and EPA, and in Yellowstone National Park by the NPS.

Visibility monitoring in the Bridger Wilderness and Yellowstone National Park is conducted by the Interagency Monitoring of

Protected Visual Environments (IMPROVE) program.

Air quality standards and guidelines are developed as needed in coordination with the Wyoming DEQ and the EPA.

Cultural, Natural History, and Paleontological Resources Management

Management Objectives: Protect and preserve important cultural, natural history, and paleontological resources.

Management Actions: Site-specific inventories for cultural resources are required before the start of surface-disturbing activities. Adverse effects on significant cultural resources are mitigated, or the resources themselves avoided.

Sites listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places are managed for their local and national significance and in compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act, the Archaeological Resources Protection Act, the American Indians Religious Freedom Act, and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, as appropriate.

Consultation with the Advisory Council for Historic Preservation and the State Historic Preservation Office is consistent with the National Cultural Programmatic Agreement (1994) and the State Protocol Agreement between the Wyoming BLM State Director and the Wyoming State Historic Preservation Officer (1998).

If sites considered sacred, sensitive, or respected by Native Americans, or if traditional cultural properties (TCP) are identified, they are managed in consultation with affected Native American representatives.

The collection of vertebrate fossils on public lands is generally prohibited. Collection of these fossils is only allowed by qualified institutions, individuals, or consultants who obtain a permit. Collecting common invertebrate fossils and petrified wood for hobby purposes is allowed on public lands.

Fire Management

Management Objective: Cost-effectively protect life, property, and resource values from wildfire.

Management Actions: Fire suppression is coordinated through a protection agreement with the Bridger-Teton National Forest and an annual operating plan with Teton County.

Firefighting emphasizes minimum-impact suppression techniques unless public safety is jeopardized. For example, the construction of fire lines is avoided if natural fire breaks can be used.

Hazardous Materials and Wastes Management

Management Objective: Protect public health and safety and the environment on public lands, emphasize waste reduction for authorized actions, comply with applicable federal and state laws, prevent waste contamination from any authorized actions, minimize federal exposure to the liabilities associated with waste management on public lands, and integrate hazardous materials and waste management policies and controls into all management programs.

Management Actions: For authorized activities that involve hazardous materials or their use, precautions are taken to guard against releases into the environment. In the event of a release of hazardous materials on public lands, appropriate warnings are provided to potentially affected communities and individuals, and precautions are taken against public exposure to contaminated areas.

Sale, exchange, or other transfer of public lands on which storage or disposal of hazardous substances has been known to occur requires public notification of the type and quantity of the substances.

Public lands contaminated with hazardous wastes are reported, secured, and cleaned up according to federal and state laws, regulations, and contingency plans, including the federal Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act. Parties responsible for contamination are liable for cleanup and resource damage costs, as prescribed by law.

Surface-disturbing and disruptive activities associated with all types of hazardous materials and waste management are subject to appropriate mitigation.

Lands and Realty Management

Management Objective: Maintain access for existing land uses, especially recreation. Retain public lands and resources for public use.

Management Actions

Access—In general, opportunities for public access are maintained on public lands and on state- and privately-owned lands covered by recreation easements. However, access to specific areas may be closed or restricted to protect public health and safety.

Public access is maintained at the Wilson Bridge boat and river access site.

Whenever possible, any issues related to the management of federal recreation easements on state- and privately-owned lands are resolved through the development of cooperative agreements.

Landownership Adjustments—Public lands in the planning area are retained for public use. In some cases, this could include the sale, exchange, or transfer of public lands to meet the needs of the local community for parks and pathways, or for other public purposes, with a contingency for public use to be retained.

Situations involving agricultural or occupancy trespass on public land are resolved by removing the unauthorized use.

Public lands within the Snake River corridor are identified as unsuitable for agricultural development and are closed to desert land entry and agricultural lease.

Rights-of-Way—Public lands in the planning area are open to future rights-of-way development. Proposals are addressed case-by-case with emphasis on avoiding certain conflict or sensitive areas. The location of rights-of-way on public land to cross the Snake River is prohibited.

The following are right-of-way avoidance areas:

- big game crucial winter habitat;
- raptor nesting and concentration areas;
- threatened, endangered, proposed, and candidate species habitat;
- important cultural resources that are listed or eligible for listing on the National Historic Register; and
- scenic areas identified as visual resource management (VRM) Class I and II areas.

Surface-disturbing and disruptive activities associated with all types of rights-of-way maintenance and/or development are subject to appropriate mitigation.

Withdrawals—Approximately 5,937 acres of public lands and mineral estate described in PLO 7143 (June 1, 1995) remain closed to mineral or surface entry until June 1, 2005. (As described In the PLO, “mineral or surface entry” pertains to activities such as the staking and development of mining claims for locatable minerals and desert land entry, but does not apply to the sale, exchange, or transfer of public lands, or mineral leasing, or the extraction of sand and gravel through sales and permits).

After June 1, 2005, a long-term protective withdrawal will be pursued for public lands and mineral estate in the Snake River corridor to prohibit the staking and development of mining claims.

Desert land entry will continue to be prohibited after June 1, 2005.

Areas with rare or sensitive resources may be proposed for withdrawal from mineral and/or surface entry on a case-by-case basis.

Livestock Grazing Management

Management Objective: Maintain or improve forage production and ecological conditions for the benefit of livestock use, wildlife habitat, watershed values, and riparian areas.

Management Actions: The current amounts, kinds, and seasons of livestock grazing use will continue to be authorized unless monitoring indicates a grazing use adjustment is necessary, or an environmental assessment indicates a change in grazing use is appropriate, or public lands are sold, exchanged, or transferred.

Adjustments in the levels of livestock grazing are made as a result of monitoring and after consultation or negotiation with grazing permittees and other affected interests (including local and state governmental entities, as appropriate).

The implementation of management actions on the public lands such as the use of grazing systems, land treatments, and range improvements is consistent with the *Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management*.

Applications to graze on public lands are addressed case-by-case.

The placement of salt and mineral supplements on public lands is allowed outside riparian areas in locations designed to improve livestock distribution.

Riparian habitats that are outside the Snake River channel are maintained in a properly functioning condition. (Riparian habitats on the Snake River proper, between the levees, are in a nonfunctioning condition because of the effects of flood control. This condition would remain constant.)

Fence construction requires site-specific analyses. Fence construction and modification conforms to applicable fencing standards.

Surface-disturbing and disruptive activities associated with all types of range project construction and maintenance are subject to appropriate mitigation.

Minerals Management

Management Objective: Maintain opportunities for mineral exploration and development while maintaining other resource values.

Management Actions

General—Surface-disturbing and disruptive activities associated with mineral exploration and development are subject to appropriate mitigation.

Geothermal—Public lands and federal mineral estate throughout the planning area are closed to geothermal leasing consideration.

Oil and Gas—Public lands and federal mineral estate are closed to leasing consideration for oil and gas.

Other Leasable Minerals—Public lands and federal mineral estate are closed to leasing consideration for phosphate, sodium, and other leasable minerals.

Locatable Minerals—The public lands and mineral estate described in PLO 7143 (June 1, 1995) remain closed to mineral entry and the staking and development of mining claims until June 1, 2005.

After June 1, 2005, a long-term protective withdrawal will be pursued for public lands and federal mineral estate in the Snake River corridor to prohibit the staking and development of mining claims.

Salable Minerals—The extraction of sand and gravel is considered, case-by-case, on public lands and federal mineral estate throughout the planning area.

Access is allowed across public lands near the Wilson and South Park bridges for mining of salable minerals on adjacent state- or privately-owned lands.

The mining of sand and gravel and access across public lands for this purpose, is subject to seasonal requirements to protect

fish spawning, important wildlife habitat areas, and periods of high recreational use.

Off-Road Vehicle Management

Management Objective: Maintain opportunities for motorized and nonmotorized vehicle recreation while avoiding adverse effects on other resource values.

Management Actions: Public lands in the planning area are limited to designated roads and trails for motorized and nonmotorized vehicle use and limited seasonally where needed to protect wildlife habitat.

Over-the-snow motorized vehicles are subject to the same requirements and limitations as all other motorized vehicles.

Recreation Management

Management Objectives: Maintain opportunities for river floating while providing minimal visitor services.

Management Actions: Put in and take out and day use of public lands associated with river floating by commercial outfitters and by individuals (representing all recreational floating activity) is allowed. The estimated current use level is about 4,340 boat trips, with about 29,000 people floating the river each year from Wilson Bridge to South Park.

Total land-based (non-floating) recreational use in the Snake River corridor is unknown; however, it is estimated that about 20,000 visitor days are spent annually on public lands at the Walton Parcel, near Wilson Bridge.

Public access is maintained at the Wilson Bridge boat and river access site for river floating.

Existing visitor facilities at the Wilson Bridge boat and river access site are maintained.

Overnight camping is prohibited on public lands in the planning area that are accessible by road. Other lands that are only accessible by boat are open to camping although campfires are prohibited.

Campers are required to practice “leave no trace” techniques.

Recreation sites and facilities on public lands are maintained or developed consistent with the protection of riparian habitat.

Surface-disturbing and disruptive activities associated with the construction and use of roads and recreational facilities are subject to appropriate mitigation.

Vegetation Management

Management Objective: Maintain or improve the diversity of plant communities to support wildlife habitat, watershed protection, scenic resources, and livestock grazing; control existing noxious weed infestations and prevent their spread.

Management Actions:

General—Surface-disturbing and disruptive activities associated with all types of vegetation management are subject to appropriate mitigation.

Firewood harvesting is prohibited on public lands.

Evaluation and designation of critical habitat for threatened or endangered plant species on public lands is coordinated with the FWS. If proposed surface-disturbing activities could affect these species, the FWS

is consulted as required by the Endangered Species Act.

Inventories for candidate plant species are required before surface-disturbing activities are conducted on public lands in areas with potential habitat for these species.

Noxious Weeds—Noxious weeds and other undesirable vegetation in the Jackson Hole Weed Management Area are controlled in accordance with the Jackson Hole Weed Management Plan.

Control of noxious weeds may include manual, mechanical, biological, or chemical methods. If herbicides are proposed for use, those with minimum toxicity to wildlife and fish are selected. As appropriate, buffer zones are provided along riparian areas.

Noxious weed treatments avoid bird nesting seasons and other times when loss of cover or disturbance by equipment would be detrimental to wildlife. Projects that may affect candidate, threatened, or endangered animals or plants are postponed or modified to protect these species. In such cases, the FWS is consulted as required by the Endangered Species Act.

Visual Resources Management

Management Objective: Maintain or improve scenic values throughout the planning area.

Management Actions: Visual resources are considered before authorizing land uses that may affect them. VRM requirements are applied on public lands or to federal mineral development on split-estate lands (where the minerals are federally-owned).

Facilities or structures, such as power lines and storage tanks, are screened,

painted, and otherwise designed to blend with the surrounding landscape.

Public lands are managed in conformance with Class II VRM standards.

Watershed Management

Management Objectives: Maintain or improve water quality and comply with state water quality standards. Reduce erosion by increasing vegetative production and ground cover. Maintain or improve wetland and riparian habitat.

Management Actions: The protection of watershed resources is considered in the analysis of project proposals. As needed, state of Wyoming Best Management Practices are applied.

The rights to water-related projects on public lands are filed with the Wyoming State Engineer's office.

To reduce the amount of nonpoint pollution entering waterways, pollution prevention plans are developed for actions that qualify under the "Wyoming Storm Water Discharge Program."

Riparian area conditions are monitored and evaluated as part of site-specific activity or implementation plans. Management emphasis is placed on riparian areas that are not properly functioning.

Surface-disturbing and disruptive activities associated with watershed management are subject to appropriate mitigation.

Wildlife and Fish Habitat Management

Management Objective: Maintain existing habitat for wildlife and fish.

Management Actions

General—Surface-disturbing and disruptive activities associated with wildlife and fish management are subject to appropriate mitigation.

Wildlife Habitat—To the extent possible, suitable habitat and forage are provided to support wildlife populations defined in the WGFD Strategic Plan objectives. Requests by WGFD to change the objectives are considered, based on habitat capability and availability.

The evaluation and designation of critical habitat for threatened or endangered wildlife species on public lands is coordinated with the FWS. If proposed surface-disturbing or disruptive activities may affect these species, the FWS is consulted as required by the Endangered Species Act.

Public lands in the Snake River corridor are identified as public safety zones where the use of M-44 sodium cyanide devices, leg-hold traps, and kill-type traps are prohibited. Evaluation of other types of animal control

methods undertaken to resolve human-wildlife conflicts is conducted by and coordinated with USDA, Animal Plant and Health Inspection Service, Wildlife Services.

Raptor nest sites and roosts, cottonwood trees, riparian areas, and other habitats related to raptor foraging and concentration areas are protected by restricting surface-disturbing activities on public lands near these habitat areas.

Measures to protect these raptor habitats include seasonal restrictions on surface-disturbing activities within 0.5 to 1 mile of nesting sites, depending on the species, and a prohibition on firewood harvesting.

Fence construction requires site-specific analyses. Fence construction and modification conform to applicable standards.

Fish Habitat—Riparian areas are managed to improve fisheries.

Surface-disturbing activities that would add sediment to the Snake River are prohibited when game fish are spawning.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES OF EXISTING MANAGEMENT

INTRODUCTION

This section discusses the environmental impacts that could be reasonably expected to result from the continuation of existing management.

Air Quality

Noise and airborne dust would result from the use of motorized vehicles along levees and at the Wilson Bridge boat and river access site and from the mining of sand and gravel.

The effects of noise and dust would be local and temporary, lasting a few minutes as vehicles travel along levees, and during periods of active sand and gravel mining.

Management actions for minimizing emissions and monitoring for visibility and acid rain would protect airsheds in the Bridger Wilderness and Yellowstone National Park.

Cultural, Natural History, and Paleontological Resources

The inventory and protection of cultural resources would prevent unintentional damage to these resources from surface-disturbing activities. New information about these resources would be acquired through detailed inventories.

Inventories conducted for proposed surface-disturbing activities would identify between 2 and 10 important cultural resource

sites. Valuable scientific information would be gained.

Permits would be issued for the scientific study of cultural and paleontological resources on public lands. These permits would ensure that important sites are protected and new scientific information is made available to the public.

The BLM's consultation with the Advisory Council for Historic Preservation and the State Historic Preservation Office would gradually improve and take less time because of new agreements for coordination.

Sporadic unauthorized collection of cultural and paleontological resources would take place, although the overall effect would not be significant.

The use of minimum-impact suppression techniques for fighting wildfires would protect some cultural and paleontological resources from surface-disturbing activities.

There would be no adverse effects on significant cultural, natural history, or paleontological resources from the sale, exchange, or transfer of public lands.

Lands and Realty

Landownership adjustments would not affect the level of public use of lands within the Snake River corridor since land transfers would focus on meeting the needs of the local community for parks and other public purposes.

Opportunities for the management of public areas by Teton County, or jointly by the county, state, and(or) federal agencies, would exist.

By retaining public lands for public use, affordable recreational opportunities for low-income residents of Teton County would be ensured, in compliance with Environmental Justice requirements (E.O. 12898).

The level of public use declines on public lands that are developed for sand and gravel mining.

Livestock Grazing

Temporary reductions in available forage would result from surface-disturbing activities such as surface mining for sand and gravel and the development of rights-of-way. Following reclamation of these areas, forage production would return to pre-disturbance levels.

Forage available for grazing would increase through weed management.

The potential transfer of some public lands would cause a reduction in livestock grazing, if grazing is determined to be incompatible with the parks and pathways to be established by the other public agencies.

Recreational use would cause minor conflicts with livestock grazing.

The prohibition of some forms of predator control to protect the safety of recreational users and their pets would result in continued livestock losses to predators.

Mineral Resources

There would be no development of oil and gas in the planning area from public lands.

There would be no effects related to the management prescriptions for geothermal energy, phosphate, sodium, and coal because these resources do not exist in commercial amounts on public lands in the planning area.

The mining of sand and gravel on public lands could supply a small part of Jackson Hole's demand for construction materials.

Recreation

Landownership adjustments would not affect the level of public use of lands within the Snake River corridor since land transfers would focus on meeting the needs of the local community for parks and other public purposes.

By retaining public lands for public use, affordable recreational opportunities for low-income residents of Teton County would be ensured, in compliance with Environmental Justice requirements (E.O. 12898).

Recreational use would decline on public lands that are developed for sand and gravel mining.

The Wilson Bridge boat and river access site would be congested by river users during peak use times.

Truck access across public lands for mining sand and gravel near the Wilson and South Park bridges would reduce the quality of recreational experiences and public safety.

Some unauthorized camping would take place along the Snake River corridor.

Vegetation

The absence of flooding outside the levees, the exclusion of fire, and late season grazing by livestock and wildlife (during the

fall and early winter) would inhibit cottonwood regeneration. The cottonwood-dominated community would change to a shrub-grass or conifer community with time.

Livestock grazing, recreational use, and surface-disturbing activities would result in seed dispersal and the establishment of noxious weeds. These effects would be mitigated by implementation of the Jackson Hole Weed Management Plan.

Visual Resources

Airborne dust would result from the use of motorized vehicles along levees and at the Wilson Bridge boat and river access site from the mining of sand and gravel. Visibility would be affected on a local and temporary basis.

Soils and Water

There would be minor adverse effects on water quality from sand and gravel mining, from grazing by livestock and wildlife, and from recreational activities on public lands. Soils would become compacted and erode more easily in some areas because of recreational visitor use.

Wildlife and Fish Habitat

River-associated activities such as fishing and floating could reduce the success of spring nesting and young-rearing by birds which depend on the Snake River. The effects would be greatest on seven (of the 11) bald eagle nesting areas that are viewable from some portion of the river or its banks.

The bald eagle's preference for fishing during periods of open water, its reliance on cottonwoods for nesting habitat, and its susceptibility to human disturbance could reduce foraging opportunities and decrease nesting success. If nests are abandoned, the number of successful fledges would decrease. Other raptors would be affected in a similar way.

Cooperation with the WGFD and FWS to identify active or historic raptor nest locations and to impose seasonal restrictions to reduce human intrusions would ensure minimal impacts on nesting pairs and nestlings.

Overwintering bald and golden eagles may benefit from road-killed forage associated with increased winter tourism and resident road traffic. However, the eagles would also become more susceptible to being struck by traffic.

Sand and gravel mining would be most likely during mid-fall to late winter when river flows are lowest, and operations would remain outside critical wintering habitats and nest site buffer zones. These factors, and the use of site-specific seasonal requirements, would prevent most impacts to nesting, foraging, and wintering habitat on the Snake River and tributaries.

River-related recreation during the late spring through early fall would not have a significant effect on big game and other mammals. Sightings of these animals would enhance the recreational experience of visitors to the Snake River.

Anticipated actions and activities would not adversely affect smaller mammals, such as furbearers and predators, or amphibians and reptiles. Anticipated beneficial management practices in riparian areas would enhance habitat for these animals.

There would be no effects on threatened, endangered, proposed, or candidate species including gray wolves, grizzly bears, bald eagles, peregrine falcons, the Canada lynx, and whooping cranes.

Wildlife migration routes and corridors would be protected.

ALTERNATIVES TO EXISTING MANAGEMENT

There are many possible alternatives to continuation of existing management in the Snake River Corridor. Possible changes to existing management include, but are not limited to:

Reducing the level of land use restrictions, providing for higher levels of mineral development and recreational use.

Limiting access by motorized vehicles.

Development of additional recreational facilities, such as boat-in campsites, new boat and river access sites, and interpretive and directional signs.

Protection of wildlife habitat and a more isolated recreational experience through a

reduced level of river floating.

Removal of some or all of the lands from public ownership and use.

Retention and/or consolidation of the public lands.

Opening up all the parcels to livestock grazing.

Elimination of livestock grazing on all parcels.

Many other options to change existing management exist.

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT IN THE PLANNING AREA

INTRODUCTION

A detailed description of the affected environment will be presented in the draft and final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Resource Management Plan (RMP). The following types of information will be included:

Climate and Air Quality

This section will include information on precipitation, both rainfall and snowfall averages, temperature information, growing season, and current air quality information.

Candidate Plant Species

Information would be included on threatened, endangered, and candidate plant species found in the planning area, or with potential habitat in the area, and descriptions of what characteristics make an area potential habitat.

Cultural Resources

The document will include information on known prehistoric cultures which inhabited the Jackson Hole area, and known cultural sites and artifacts occurring in the area. Information on historic sites and resources will also be included.

Fire Management

The RMP EIS will include information on fire history, fuels information, and the present fire management strategy.

Lands and Realty

Information will be included on the history of the litigation and settlement of ownership of the public lands in Jackson Hole, existing rights-of-way, recreation and public purposes (R&PP) leases and land sales. Information will also include the current number of access roads, pipelines, power lines, waterlines, telephone cables, highways, and other facilities. There will also be a description of current withdrawals in the area, access and transportation. A description of all the public land parcels will be included in an appendix to the RMP/EIS.

Livestock Grazing

The RMP EIS will describe the current level of livestock grazing, with allotment names, acreages, and active preference held by grazing lessees. Grazing allotments will be shown on a map. Information will be provided on actual grazing use made in recent years, range improvements, monitoring information, and results of assessments for compliance with the *Standards for Rangeland Health*.

Minerals and Geology

Information will be presented on the glacial and tectonic geology of Jackson Hole, and the presence or potential for petroleum resources. The document will also describe geologic hazards, including flooding, earthquakes, and landslides. Information on solid minerals, including coal, sodium, potassium, oil shale, phosphate, salable

minerals including sand and gravel, and locatable minerals, mainly gold.

Off-Road Vehicles

The RMP EIS will include information on the types of ORV's used in the planning area, and areas where they are commonly used.

Recreation

Information will be presented on the types of recreation available on the public land parcels, which areas are commonly used for recreation, and numbers of people making the different types of recreational uses.

Socioeconomics

The document will include a discussion of the socioeconomics of Jackson Hole, and how the public lands are involved. The discussion will include both for-profit and not-for-profit uses of the parcels and the river corridor.

Soils

The RMP EIS will describe the soil types found in Jackson Hole and specifically on the public land parcels, and the implications of the different soil types for land management.

Vegetation

The document will include descriptions of the vegetation communities found on the public land parcels, including species lists.

Information about noxious weeds and current vegetation uses will also be included.

Visual Resources

There will be a description of the visual resources of the parcels and the Snake River corridor, and how this relates to land use on both public and private parcels.

Watershed

This section will include a description of the upper Snake River basin, river flows, and characteristics of the river and the effects of the levee system.

Wildlife

Information will be included on the types of wildlife that use the area, either seasonally or year-round; the amount of wildlife habitat provided and its quality, threatened and endangered species, and the effects on human activity on wildlife and its habitat.

Wild and Scenic Rivers

This section will include a discussion of eligibility and suitability of the parcels for Wild, Scenic, or Recreational status. These determinations will be made in the RMP EIS.

In addition to the above information, the draft RMP EIS will include a discussion of the Contingent Valuation Modeling (CVM) survey that was conducted during the summer of 2000.

APPENDICES TO BE INCLUDED IN THE RMP EIS

DESCRIPTION OF THE PUBLIC LAND PARCELS

This appendix will include legal descriptions, stipulations from the court judgements quieting title to the parcels in the U.S., and physical descriptions of characteristics and resources present on each parcel.

WYOMING BLM MITIGATION GUIDELINES FOR SURFACE- DISTURBING AND DISRUPTIVE ACTIVITIES

For any activity that causes surface disturbance or other direct physical impacts to public lands, this appendix outlines mitigation measures to be applied and criteria for determining when to apply them.

WYOMING BLM's STANDARDS FOR HEALTHY RANGELANDS and GUIDELINES FOR LIVESTOCK GRAZING MANAGEMENT

This appendix lists the Wyoming BLM standards for healthy rangelands. The

standards apply to all programs. In addition, the appendix includes guidelines for livestock grazing management, to be applied when lands do not meet one or more Standards and livestock grazing is a cause for failure to meet the Standard(s).

“LEAVE NO TRACE” PRACTICES FOR RECREATION ON PUBLIC LANDS

Includes practices for camping, hiking, and other recreational uses.

OTHER

Other appendices will be included as necessary to provide necessary scientific or background information for the RMP EIS.

BLM-MANAGED LAND PARCELS ON THE SNAKE RIVER

